B.C. Lindsay 134 78

THE

HAULING DOG IN CANADA

(From Forest & Stream)

AUGUST 22nd & 29th 1896.

Dogs are used as draft animals in the northwest of Canada, on the Labrador coast, and in the vicinity of Quebec. Dog teams are used during winter in the northwest by the wood Indians and the Hudson Bay Company's men. The detachments of the Northwest Mounted Police also made use of them in the northernmost divisions of the Territory. Butler, in his "Great Lone Land" and "Wild North Land," gives an excellent description of the *huskies* (as the dogs are called by the half-breeds and Indians out there) and of the work done by them.

Along the Labrador coast, where there are few horses, dogs are used as draft animals in winter. In summer all traveling and freighting is done by water. In the former season the mails are carried along the coast by dog teams.

The Labrador dog is really an Esquimau when he is not a Newfoundland or a nondescript, and the Esquimau dog is almost exactly like the *huskie*. It has a pointed nose, sharp, [illegible]ght ears, long hair and a bushy tail, and looks the picture [illegible]is first cousin, the wolf. These Esquimau dogs are very [illegible]age, have exceedingly powerful jaws, and will eat anything

and snap at everything. So ferocious and destructive are they that the people down there, who are beginning to devote themselves to agriculture more than they did before, under the auspices of the Government of the Province of Quebec, which has spared no pains to promote the development of agricultural interests, have petitioned to have all the Esquimau dogs destroyed which are not required for the mail service, because they kill the cattle and sheep.

They get an immense amount of punishment, but do not seem to mind it, and will snap at and bite their masters whenever they get a chance. In summer they skirmish around for food, eating the offal of the fish and seals caught by their masters, gorging themselves on some stranded whale or porpoise, or they hunt for themselves in the woods. In winter they live on the stores of dried caplin and whale or seal flesh which their masters have kept for the purpose, with the additional treat of the dish water in which the greasy plates have been washed.

Dogs in Labrador are harnessed differently from those in the Northwest. There, where they drive over plains or through open woods, they are harnessed tandem fashion, one in front of the other, and always retain that position. In Labrador each dog is harnessed to the sleigh by a separate thong, so that when the team gets on ice, as it frequently does, going over the bays from point to point to shorten the distance, the dogs spread out like a fan. This does not interfere with the draft, is safer when going over thin ice and a dog can fall out to satisfy the demands of nature or to scratch his fleas without stopping the remainder of the team. These thongs are of various lengths, so that when the team comes to a narrow road between trees the dogs can fall into Indian file, one behind the other. The leading dog always has the longest thong, so as to easily keep ahead of the others. This he is always anxious to do for many reasons. In the first place he is very proud of the position and is always ready to fight all comers for the privilege, and to retain the post he must be top dog in all combats. Then he is generally petted, made much of, better cared for and better fed than the others and sometimes kept in the house while they have to rough it outside, the result being that he is proportionately hated by

all the others, who, in their anxiety to get a snap at him, pull with all their might, while he does the same to keep away from them. This is pretty much like the idea of holding a carrot on a pole in front of a donkey's nose to induce him to go fast.

The harness is all made of sealskin ; a broad strap rests on the chest, being retained in position by another over the neck ; a piece over the back joins the top of the breast-piece to another arouud the body and from this the thong leads back to the sleigh.

The Labrador sleigh is the regular Esquimau sleigh described in books of Arctic travel, the *kometik*, built of drift-wood, fastened by thongs of sealskin, not a nail or piece of iron or steel entering its composition, whereby it is much more elastic and can better resist hard shocks. The runners are made of whale ribs in pieces about 4ft. long by 3in, wide the total length being about 8ft. These are fastened to the woodwork in a very ingenious manner, small holes are countersunk in the whalebone, and through these are passed thin but strong thongs of sealskin or seal sinews, which are lashed tightly. The advantage of whalebone over iron or steel is that it does not get clogged or adhere to wet snow.

The driver, as a rule, runs behind the sleigh when loaded, but when the snow is soft he puts on his snowshoes to beat it down, and the dogs follow in his tracks. When the dogs lag the driver uses the Esquimau dog-whip—a terrible instrument, the mere crack of which makes every dog jump into his collar and settle down to work. It is made entirely of sealskin thongs plaited together till they reach a sharp point. The handle, made of the same material, is about as thick as a man's wrist and only 18in. long, while the lash is from 20 to 30ft. in length. It requires a great deal of practice to wield this properly, and a novice, in trying to snap it, is just as likely as not to hit himself, in the face generally. It is no wonder that the dogs dread it, for an expert can take a piece of skin off every time.

When a dog is in disgrace for some misbehavior, or if he will not stop fighting, he is hobbled. A thong is put around his neck, the two ends are knotted together, and one of his front paws is passed through it so that he cannot pull it out ;

thus hobbled he generally limps off on three legs into a corner where he keeps quiet and shows by the expression of his countenance that he feels the disgrace.

The members of the Laurentides Fish and Game Club, to which I belong, had, like myself, many opportunities of observing the habits, training, etc., of Labrador dogs. One of our guardians, who came from that part of the country, had for many years the contract for driving the mails along the north shore, and owned a fine team. This he was allowed by the club to bring with him, as there was a good deal of hauling to be done from the railway station to the club house, and, moreover, the members proposed to have grand rides over the frozen lakes, and also to be able to bring a larger quantity of supplies with them when they went to the more distant camps to hunt or to fish through the ice, which was allowed in those days. They had no end of fun with these dogs for a while, but in the end they died off and were not replaced. They were found to be a nuisance in summer time, as they would devour the trout caught by the members unless constantly watched, and their barking, which was more like the howling of wolves, frightened the game away. They were always in a state of semi-starvation, owing to the difficulty of keeping them supplied with food, and if anyone was rash enough to hand them a piece of bread or meat instead of throwing it to them, he generally had some trouble in rescuing his hand. It was wonderful to see them open cans of preserved meat with their strong fangs. The leader was a very fine brute, but a very savage one, which no one dared to handle but the guardian, who ruled it more by fear than love and who was bitten by it pretty badly sometimes.

We had some very amusing experiences with these dogs. On one occasion several of us resolved to go and spend a few days up at the club grounds, seventy miles north of Quebec, to shake the cobwebs out of our heads, by walking through the spruce woods on snowshoes, breathing the ozone of the mountain air, driving over the ice on the lakes with the dog team, winding up the day's exertions and amusements by quiet games of cards or chess or by spinning yarns, and eating our meals with an appetite which would have driven a boarding-house keeper to despair. Charlie B. and I went

on the day before, as an advance guard, to get everything ready. On our arrival at our station on the Lake St. John Railway, we found Hébert, the guardian, with his dog team all decorated for the occasion. The dogs wagged their tails at us, looking forward evidently to the prospect of having some preserved meat cans to open, besides other tidbits. Leaving the guardian and the men we had brought with us to bring on the commissariat supplies, we put on our snow-shoes, crossed the Batiscan River and climbed up the gorge leading to the first lake of our main chain, on which the club house is built. As we walked on, we took deep breaths of the bracing air whose exhilarating effect it is impossible to describe, and admired the wonderful shapes assumed by the snow as it had fallen on trees and stumps. Having made all our arrangements, we started next day down to the station with the guardian and the dogs to meet our friends. Sitting on the *kometik*, we drove quickly over the road on the ice and also the road through the woods, but when we began to go down hill our troubles began. To keep the sleigh from coming on the dogs, Hébert turned himself into a brake, digging his heels into the snow, and did very well until, at a sharp turn, he rolled off and the brake was gone. Of course the sleigh came upon the dogs' heels, and they, with a howl, rushed madly on to keep ahead of it. We clung on, awaiting events, and fairly flew. Suddenly one dog made a spring to one side, got his thong across a stump, upon which he pulled the sleigh, bringing the outfit to an abrupt stop. Charlie and I flew up in the air like stones from a catapult, he landing head first in a snowdrift, I across a fallen tree, fortunately thickly covered with snow, while the dogs, sleigh, stump and thongs were all tangled up, and the biggest dog fight was going on that I had ever seen. Having pulled my friend out by the heels, we watched the fight, unable even to bet on any one dog, they were so much mixed up, and we too wise to interfere until the driver came down with his whip and separated and disentangled the dogs. We considered that we had had enough driving down hill for one day, so we walked the remainder of the way, the guardian walking also, and, with a thong fastened to the rear of the sleigh, kept it from overrunning the dogs. We had a very plea-

sant time; and, on the day before we came away, had quite an adventure. A thaw had been followed by a frost and the snow covering the ice on the lakes was frozen hard, so four of our party got on the sleigh to have a final drive. They started in great glee, and just as they rounded the first point they saw a fine young caribou buck about 500yds. ahead. As soon as the dogs saw it they gave a yelp like a pack of wolves and started like an arrow from a bow after the caribou, which looked round on hearing the yelp, saw its pursuers and flew over the ice, keeping in the middle of the lake. When the dogs started with a jerk, one of the party was thrown off violently and slid a long way on the hard snow before he could pull up, feeling red hot from the friction and gazing wistfully after his fast disappearing comrades, who clung to the sleigh like grim death and enjoyed this novel hunt. Of course there was not the slightest chance of their catching the animal, which, instead of making for the bush on the nearest shore, held on in the middle of the lake, right up to the end, where it took to the woods. The impromptu hunters soon found themselves in a difficulty, for it was impossible to stop the dogs, who could not realize that they had a sleigh with passengers behind them. The driver tried in vain to stop them, and there was every probability of broken limbs or necks when they would strike the bush. However, they soon made up their minds and dropped off one by one, rolling over and over in the snow or sliding some distance away, with much damage to their nether garments and much abrasion of the cuticle. Meanwhile the dogs, relieved of the weight, rushed after the deer and, entering the woods, got tangled up among the trees and, as usual on such occasions, wound up with a free fight among themselves. After extricating them, the party re-embarked and drove quietly back to the house, where they repaired damages, related their adventure and wrote it down in the club's log-book.

These dogs are very hardy and always sleep outside in the coldest weather, However, they have no objection to heat and always try to get it when they can. Once we were in one of the remote camps and were lying on our bed of boughs, smoking our evening pipe, when one of us got up

suddenly with an imprecation, his eyes full of earth. Soon we were all threatened with the same thing and at the same time heard a sound of scratching. Catching up the lantern, we turned out to investigate and found that the sleigh had been placed upright against the side of the log hut and that the dogs had used it as a ladder to climb up into the small space between the sloping roof of gouged troughs and the earth-covered ceiling of small, round logs and birch bark to get near the warm stove-pipe, and, in settling down, had caused the earth to fall through the interstices. We sent Hébert to dislodge them and take their ladder away, and next morning we found them all curled up and covered with snow which had fallen during the night.

THE hauling dog is not confined to barbarism or semi-civilization. He is used as a draft animal in many places, but in the vicinity of Quebec he is an institution, although of late years he is not so commonly used. In my young days, children drove dogs as they now drive a pony or a goat, but somewhere about 1860 a law was passed prohibiting the driving of dogs in the streets of the city and it was confined to the suburbs, especially that of St. Sauveur. Large mongrels were bred and it is really wonderful what loads they could draw. The Newfoundland was the favorite, owing to its size and weight, but when mastiffs or St. Bernards came in, it was found that, by crossing them with greyhounds, a fine hauling dog was the result, especially when it retained the short hair of the greyhound, as, in such case, it was better for the deep snow in winter. There was one dog, a cross between a mastiff and a brindled greyhound, which retained the color and shape of the latter, but on a more massive scale, which had quite a record for its hauling powers.

These dogs, whose harness is made like that of a pony, minus the bridle, and which are driven in shafts, are used for hauling wood and water; beggars use them to drive to their stations. At the present moment there is a cripple at the Island of Orleans who has a fine pair of Newfoundland dogs which he harnesses either abreast or tandem to a cart, and drives down to the park where he begs.

This custom of driving dogs seems to have been followed in this country from the first settlement of the colony, and

no doubt came from France, in the northern section of which, as in Belgium, dogs are still used as draft animals. The Swedish naturalist Kalm, who came to Canada in 1749 and published a very interesting account of his travels in North America, which has been translated into English, has the following on the subject:

"In many places here they use their dogs to fetch water out of the river. I saw two great dogs to-day put before a little cart, one before the other. In the cart was a barrel. The dogs are directed by a boy who runs behind the cart, and as soon as they come to the river they jump in of their own accord. When the barrel is filled the dogs draw their burden up the hill again to the house they belong to. I have frequently seen dogs employed in this manner during my stay at Quebec. Sometimes they put one dog before the water carts, which are made small on purpose. The dogs are not very great, hardly of the size of our common farmers' dogs. I have seen them fetch not only water, but like-wise wood and other things. In winter it is customary in Canada for travelers to put dogs before little sledges, made on purpose to hold their clothes, provisions, etc. Poor people commonly employ them on their winter journeys and go on foot themselves. Almost all the wood which the poorer people in this country fetch out of the woods in winter is carried by dogs, which have therefore got the name of horses of the poor people. They commonly place a pair of dogs before each load of wood. I have likewise seen some neat little sledges for ladies to ride in in winter. which are drawn by a pair of dogs, and go faster on a good road than one would think they could. A middle-sized dog is sufficient to draw a single person when the roads are good. I have been told by old people that in their youth horses were very scarce here, and almost all the land carriage was then effected by dogs. Several Frenchmen, who have been among the Esquimaux on Terra Labrador, have assured me that they not only make use of dogs for drawing drays with their provisions and other necessaries, but are likewise drawn themselves in little sledges."

The Indians at Lorette, the last remnant of the great Huron nation, and who are in much demand as guides for

fishing and hunting, for they are expert canoemen and hunters, and understand English, use dogs to haul water from the river and firewood from their reserve. These same dogs are used to haul tents and hunting equipment on winter hunting expeditions, as one of these dogs, following on the track beaten by snowshoes, will haul more than a man can carry and of course it is much easier for the man.

A friend of mine, whose rifle has brought down many a moose and caribou, and who has landed many a fine salmon, once became the happy owner of a Newfoundland dog called Rover, which was a splendid hauler and which he always took with him to haul his own personal baggage. Once when proceeding on a hunting expedition north of Quebec, with Lorette Indian guides, he was accompanied by Rover, while the Indians had two other dogs. On their way they had to stop at one of the camps or log-houses erected by the Quebec Government at certain distances along the colonization road used by settlers proceeding to Lake St. John before the railway was built. Now the keeper of the post, where my friend and party had to pass the night, owned a huge cross-eyed yellow dog which had a great reputation far and wide. He was supposed to be able not only to whip his weight in wild cats, but also to beat any number of dogs as well. There was a certain amount of anxiety among the party as to what would be the result of their dogs coming into contact with the yellow dog, and the Indians especially were uneasy, for if a dog was disabled it meant so much more for his master to carry. When they arrived the canine terror happened to be away, so there was a little respite, but just as the dogs were about to partake of their meal of shorts, oatmeal and biscuit with some of the pea soup, he turned up and announced his intention of having a meal at their expense. The Indian dogs at once recognized his superiority, but Rover was too hungry to lose his dinner, so he made up his mind to fight for it, and, although generally a peaceful animal, he completely conquered the other dog, which acknowledged him as his master. The night was cold and my friend took Rover to bed with him on the top bunk. Early in the morning he awoke, and looking down he saw the Indians with their dogs lying on the floor, besides some settlers, also with dogs, as

there were not enough bunks for all. My friend, who is a prominent member of the legal profession and professionally as serious as a judge, is a regular schoolboy when out on an expedition of this kind, and his spirit of mischief inspired him with the idea of having some fun. Seizing Rover, he threw him on the floor on top of the sleeping men and dogs, and in an instant there was the biggest of dog fights on hand, in which dogs, Indians and settlers were all mixed up, and the air was blue with polyglot profanity, while Rover's master was choking with laughter under his blankets. After a while order was restored, the dogs were separated, and their owners who had been drawn into the scrimmage, were repairing damages, and anxious to find out how the row had begun. No one seemed to suspect, except the head guide, who knew my friend's propensity of old, but was too loyal to betray him.

I used to drive a dog myself harnessed to a little sleigh with miniature sleigh robes, silver bells, etc., when I was eight or ten years old, but I have had only one experience of driving a dog in the woods and I do not like it. My friend above mentioned, two others and myself, with Indian guides, were going into the bush for a fortnight's caribou hunting, and we had two dogs with us, one being driven by the cook and the other by one of the guides. After walking for some time, as we got near the lake on which we were to camp, the head guide went ahead to reconnoiter and soon returned, saying that there were caribou on the ice. Of course all wanted to go, but that was impossible, because, as all the guides were wanted, some one had to remain with the cook to drive the other dog, for the day was getting on and if we did not hurry we would have to camp in the dark, an unpleasant job at any time, but especially in a snowstorm, such as was then raging and which is ideal weather for caribou hunting, as it is easier to stalk them then. The lot fell to me, so I made the best of a bad bargain; for, in addition to driving the dog, I had to carry my pack, which was not heavy, but still confined my shoulders by the pack strap. The cook was ahead with his dog Boule (pronounced Bool, the French variation of Bull; nearly every big dog here is called Boule by the French-Canadians) and my dog followed pretty well for

Ce volume doit être rendu à la dernière date indiquée ci-dessous.

vho is a
siovally
t on an
nspired
over, he
nd dogs,
on hand,
up, and
master
a while
r owners
epairing
begun.
ho knew
o betray

e sleigh
n I was
rience of
ly friend
n guides,
hunting,
the cook
for some
amp, the
returned,
ll wanted
ides were
drive the
not hurry
ob at any
en raging
t is easier
the best
log, I had
confined
head with
riation of
le by the
well for

og-driving
nd looked
bre at him
called him
e. Finally
bout 10 or
placed the
nd pushed
The result
forward,
head first
te myself,
rtunately
or me and
down my
hen talked
ently pro-
wo dogs,
t on very

AY.

there were n
prominent n
as serious as
expedition c
him with th
threw him o
and in an in
in which do
the air was
was choking
order was r
who had l
damages, a
No one see
my friend'
him.

I used t
with mini
eight or te
driving a
above mer
were goin
and we h
and the o
time, as
head g
saying
to go, b
wanted,
other d
we wou
time, b
and wh
to stal
of a b
to carr
my sh
his do
Bull;
French

e evidently soon found out that dog-driving my line, for he sat down very often and looked I coaxed him and, I am sorry to say, swore at him glish and French and, not knowing Huron, I called him ad dog" in Latin and Greek ; but it was of no use. Finally he lay down just as we were going around a hill about 10 or 12ft. above the level. At last, out of patience, I placed the muzzle of my rifle against the back of the sleigh and pushed with my shoulder against the butt of the piece. The result exceeded my expectations, for the dog made aspring forward, I lost my balance and fell over the side of the hill, head first into a snowdrift, from which I could not extricate myself, owing to my pack being twisted round my neck. Fortunately the cook, not seeing me behind him, came to look for me and got me out all right, but with any amount of snow down my back, which was far from comfortable. The cook then talked to the dog ; I dont know what he said, but it evidently produced an impression, for I walked in front of the two dogs, while the cook followed behind the last, and we got on very well.

CRAWFORD LINDSAY.

—